1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
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It gives the father added bonds with waku (his sister's son) because the latter becomes husband to the daughter; it strengthens his position with daughter's son, who is waku to ego's son. A man prefers a son, however, because of his value in the constant tribal feuds, not only through his own assistance and the aid he brings to his relations (as, of course, the daughter does through her marriage), but also because almost the entire ceremonial life of the father's clan and tribe is centered around the males. A son inherits the right to perform certain dances through his father and never through his mother. By a son's initiation into the various ceremonies the father's social participation is further increased as it would not be if the child were a daughter.*

Each clan has ceremonial leaders for one or all of the ceremonies it owns. The leadership is inherited by the oldest son if he is old enough. If not, the deceased father's next oldest brother inherits the right until the son is old enough; or at the death or senility of the second brother the son becomes leader. The course taken depends largely upon the personalities of the two men, but in all events the son is looked upon as the heir to these rights. Such ceremonial leadership makes of a person a kind of clan headman.

When a boy is to be circumcised (at from six to nine years of age), it is the father who decides the type of initiation ceremony. The other old men of the tribe confer with him as to time, place, and other arrangements. The father and the mother make presents to the man who paints the child's body in preparation for the initiation. The father is one of those who teach his son how to hunt, fight, and conduct himself in the best possible way in the practical affairs of life. If the father is a ceremonial leader he instructs his son in the routine of songs, dances, and words that make up the great ceremonies.

Before the actual circumcision the neophyte is sent on a journey through the country of the various clans to inform the people of the coming ceremony and to collect presents. The father may refuse to send his son if he wishes; or, if he wants the boy to go, he may order him to leave and to take a certain route. No one else could do this.

A father never corrects his children. This is left to other kin (see mari, nati, et cetera).

Fathers and sons often cooperate in making a canoe. A son must always acquiesce in a father's request for the use of a canoe, or of any of the son's property. A father occupies a place much like an older

*For a full account of the individual's change of status, see Chapter IV, Age Grading.

2: Berndt E-5 (1946-1950) 1955
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613 171 The point arises here as to whether corporate descent groups of a unilineal nature are common in Australia. They have not been discussed for elsewhere, and the issue remains for empirical investigation. I would suggest that they are present. Take, for example, the vague concept of horde, as a wandering food-collecting group. This consists normally of a small group of men bound together by common descent, plus their wives. Without the latter this is usually of composition similar to that of the unilineal descent group. A great deal has been written, too, of the local group: this material needs re-analysis, in light of some of the problems raised here.[8]

182 428 591 We may now consider some of the general propositions relating to the structure of the unilineal descent group, and its place in the total social system, as put forward by Fortes. These aspects, he tells us, hold for both matrilineal and patrilineal groups.

613 Forde (1947) has discussed the emergence of such descent groups. It is assumed by him, and Lowie (1921), "that unilineal descent groups are not of significance among peoples who live in small groups, depend on a rudimentary technology, and have little durable property" (Fortes 1953:24). Now this is entirely relevant to our material and assumptions, for the descent group we discuss in this paper occurs among an Aboriginal Australian people who, we may assume, conform with the stipulations laid down for the nonsignificance of this group. If we find the unilineal descent group present in this particular situation, we may assume that we will find a strongly emphasized system of transmission of property rights and type of residence after marriage. In the former case, if we consider ritual, songs, invocations, emblems, patterns, and so on as inherited from father to son, with the oblique inheritance of the MARI-GUDARA line, reinforcing patriliny; and in the latter, the importance of patrilocal residence, with its implications relating to the spirit-conception center, these might well be significant reasons for their emergence. A poorly developed technology, and the virtual absence of durable property, are surely not critical factors governing emergence or nonemergence of such groups.

613 121 114 Now I assume from Fortes' (1953:25), "the most important feature of unilineal descent groups in Africa [e.g.] . . . is their corporate organization," that he would regard a group of this kind as a lineage. But can we regard the corporate unilineal descent group discussed in this paper as a lineage? This question I have suggested in the main body of my discussion. I said that each *babarn* could be viewed as a segment, while the parallel linked *babarn*, in toto, could be viewed as an effective lineage. That is to say, we would be considering the linguistic group as the lineage, segmented into effective unilineal descent groups, each of a corporate nature. But this is not a particularly satisfactory position. The question thus arises whether perhaps we can acknowledge the existence of this corporate descent group without considering it a lineage. This, of course, would lead to a more rigid definition of a lineage, when its depth and span would have to be considered.

Nevertheless, the fact remains that for Fortes (1953:25–26) the unilineal corporate descent group is a lineage: "the way this works depends on the kind of

3: Mountford E-5 (1948) 1956 OI17 Murngin OI17

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The upper panel of Pl. 94D represents the mangrove swamps, intersected by fresh-water streams, lines of lozenge-shaped designs. The transverse panel, *a*, is the aboriginal path from Port Bradshaw to Caledon Bay, and the footprints those of *Nalili*. The lozenge shapes on the lower panel are salt-water areas, and the parallel lines between, sand-hills on the sea coast.

Nguru-gujameri and his Wife, Njinpili-lingon

At one time a mythical *jiritja* man, *Nguru-gujameri*, and his wife, *Njinpili-lingon*, lived at Djerakoi, near Cape Shield.

One day *Nguru-gujameri* and a companion, *Ikawunga*, were spearing fish in a mangrove swamp when they noticed a number of crab-holes around the base of a tree, and the many tracks made by the creatures as they ran from one hole to another. *Nguru-gujameri* suggested to his companion, *Ikawunga*, that they should make a painting of the crab-holes and the marks of the *gunjun* crabs, so that they could keep the design for themselves.[91] The two men did this, but before they died they showed the design to some young men of their group so that the memory of it would not be lost. Since then the design has been passed from father to son. No other aboriginal is allowed to paint these marks without the owner's permission.

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Two paintings illustrate the myth of *Nguru-gujameri* and *Njinpili-lingon*.

On Pl. 95A the upper panel pictures the sea and the lower, the land. The overall pattern of the upper panel is the crab-holes and tracks of the crab, *gunjun*, which formed the design mentioned in the myth.

In the right-hand squares are four cormorants, *mudu*, in black. One of them is standing on a rock. The two squares on the extreme right contain two parrot-fish which were too large for the cormorants to swallow. The four grey reef herons, *kaulun-yeithit*, in the centre and left, lived on the sand-crabs, *gunjun*. In the lower right panels are six emus and three yams, and in the left, five emus and their footprints. The curious sixth design in the left-hand panel is a cockatoo in flight. The emus and cockatoos depicted on the lower panels are the same as those disturbed by the woman, *Njinpili-lingon*.

In the upper right of Pl. 95C, *Nguru-gujameri* is standing on a rock, spearing fish. He has a string of three in his left hand and has transfixed another with the spear held in his right. The narrow cross-hatched vertical band between *Nguru-gujameri* and the upper left panel, *b*, is the tree, mentioned in the myth, around the base of which *Ikawunga* and *Nguru-gujameri* saw the crab-holes. In panel *b* the crab-holes are indicated by dots at the junction of the series of wavy lines, and the marks made in the mud by the feet of the crabs by the many short straight lines. In the lower left-hand corner of the same panel are the holes and tracks made by the *gunjun* crabs.

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91. This design, like others in the Yirrkalla series (Fig. 65), belongs exclusively to a language group, or *mata*, of aborigines. This myth explains the origin of one of those designs which has not been identified.

3: Mountford E-5 (1948) 1956 OII7 Muragin OII7

seashore, usually with the points of their fingers. Some of the children were particularly dexterous. Plate 91C is a sand drawing of a goanna and Pl. 91D a moulded figure of a fish.

In Central Australia, I often saw the aboriginal children drawing simple figures on the sides of the drifting sand-hills. Barrett and Croll[2] illustrate figures of dugongs, sharks, crocodiles and even a lugger in sail, which the aborigines of the Wessel Islands had scooped in the sand.

3. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL ORGANIZATION AND DESIGN

The social organization of the aborigines of north-eastern Arnhem Land dominates every aspect of their social, ceremonial, philosophical and cultural life.

Warner[3] published a list of the clans (which we now call *mala*), the high and low totems of each clan, the language groups (*mata*) and the names of the totemic waterholes. This list is by far the most valuable information we have on the subject. Warner,[4] however, although obviously puzzled about the matter, made the mistake of grouping the aborigines of north-eastern Arnhem Land into tribes instead of clans, failing to recognize that the clan was the most powerful unit.

Thomson,[5] when referring to the same social organization, pointed out Warner's mistake, and at the same time defined the word *malla* (my *mala*) as referring to a strong patrilineal group linked together by the same totemic ancestors. Elkin and the Berndts[6] list some of the *dua* and *jiritja* clans (*mala*) and language groups (*mata*). I also was able to obtain additional data on the subject. Nevertheless, our knowledge of the *malas* and *matas* is still very incomplete.

As my research on the art of the aborigines of north-eastern Arnhem Land developed, however, it became evident that the effects of this social organization was as powerful in the realms of pictorial art as it is in other aspects of their culture. I found that aborigines who had totemic ancestors in common were using designs on their bark paintings and other art objects which were unlike those employed by men of different clan affiliations. Inquiries also revealed that many, perhaps all, of these designs, the property of any particular language group or *mata*, had been handed down to them by one or another of their mythical totemic ancestors.[7]

2. Barrett and Croll (1943), Pl. 71, facing p. 76. 3. Warner (1937), pp. 39-51.
4. Warner (1937), p. 35, writes: 'The tribes of northeastern Arnhem Land . . . are very weak social units, and when measured by the ordinary definitions of what constitutes a tribe fail almost completely.'
5. Thomson (1949), p. 11. 6. Elkin and the Berndts (1950), p. 23.
7. For origin of designs see myths of *Nguru-gujameri* and the *gunjun* crab design, p. 286; *Bunaitja* and the *jiritja* designs, p. 281; *borudji* the snake, and other *jiritja* designs, p. 309; *Djunkgao* and the light on the waves, the rising sun and the parallel lines of sand-hills, p. 273.

magical rites and spells, it does not involve the co-operation of spirit familiars.

The majority of informants stated that the cult of the *marrngit* is not a hereditary one, and they asserted that although the son of a *marrngitmirri* father may also be *marrngitmirri*, membership of the cult does not necessarily pass from father to son. But at least one informant of Wanguri clan, a clan of Mindjikai *barpuro*, declared that in his own clan, of which the principal territory is at Arnhem Bay, a little to the south and east of Elcho Island, the cult of the *marrngit* was hereditary and did pass from father to son. On controversial issues of this kind, long discussions often took place among the old men who acted as informants, and finally they would reach agreement and give me their verdict. Far from being careless or merely anxious to please, they took great pains to check information by referring to people who possessed specialized knowledge, and took much trouble in settling any doubtful point. My informants declared that the *marrngit* was also hereditary in the Burara tribe, where, however, the cult of the *ragalk* was also established and was certainly dominant. Some conflict, or difference of opinion, does occur in matters of this kind particularly in north-eastern Arnhem Land where there is no hard and fast, or orthodox, view, supported by a large body of opinion.

This means that, as might be expected, in the absence of a written language or an organized body to formalize belief, there is necessarily some degree of flexibility, some scope for individual ideas, and within the atypical, intensely segmentary, social organization of eastern Arnhem Land, this variability tends to be emphasized. Even in matters of kinship, which concerns the entire group, since it regulates all behaviour, differences sometimes occurred and the people would call in old men and submit an intricate or knotty problem to them in the way that I have mentioned above.

It was intended originally to confine this paper to a short account of the *marrngitmirri*, translated from the statements of the medicinemen themselves, and to follow this with descriptions of the *marrngit*, which are shown in the accompanying plates of actual drawings of their spirit familiars made by these medicinemen. But my attention has been drawn to an article by the late Revd. T. T. Webb published some years ago, 'The Making of a Marrngit,'[1] which contains some errors and misconceptions, and I have therefore extended the scope of this article to discuss the relationship of the medicineman and sorcerer in Arnhem Land and the roles and the distribution of these cults.

In the opening paragraph of this article Mr. Webb says: 'In east Arnhem Land there are two classes of magicians

[p.97(c)]

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
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411 flat strip of wood three feet long and two to three inches wide. It is held between the second and third fingers so that the end of the thrower rests in the palm. At the opposite end there is a short hook, or pointed stub of hardwood, bound firmly in place with string and gum. The end of a spear is slightly concave, so that it fits over the hook on the thrower, which is then extended above and behind the shoulder for the throw. A man's thrust is greatly increased by the spear-thrower, and heavy and light spears are thrown with dangerous accuracy for distances of from forty to eighty yards; I have seen them thrown fifty yards and penetrate six inches into a tough palm tree. A nomad and his mangal are inseparable, and if by chance he loses or breaks his spear, or even finds it inconvenient to carry one, he always carries his spear-thrower. If a spear is unexpectedly thrown at him he has a good chance of throwing it back at his enemy if he has his spear-thrower.

531 Men use infinite care in painting and decorating themselves, their weapons, and utensils, and in ceremonial life they will spend weeks in making, painting, and decorating totems. Decorative art is limited by an unchanging background of mythology and religion, and sacred designs are passed from father to son to be meticulously reproduced when preparing youths for initiation, or on corpses, skulls, and burial posts. There is little originality in ceremonial artistry, but nomads are not devoid of artistic tendencies and spend a lot of time in decorating weapons and utensils. A woman patiently weaves a dilly-bag and then sets about mixing coloured clays for its decoration; her aesthetic impulse is gratified, although the bag is not improved thereby. Youths decorate play-spears, and they cannot refrain from smearing designs on their bodies if they find moist clay or soft ochre. Men paint pictures of animals, fish, and birds on sheets of bark for pleasure, and when we took horses and